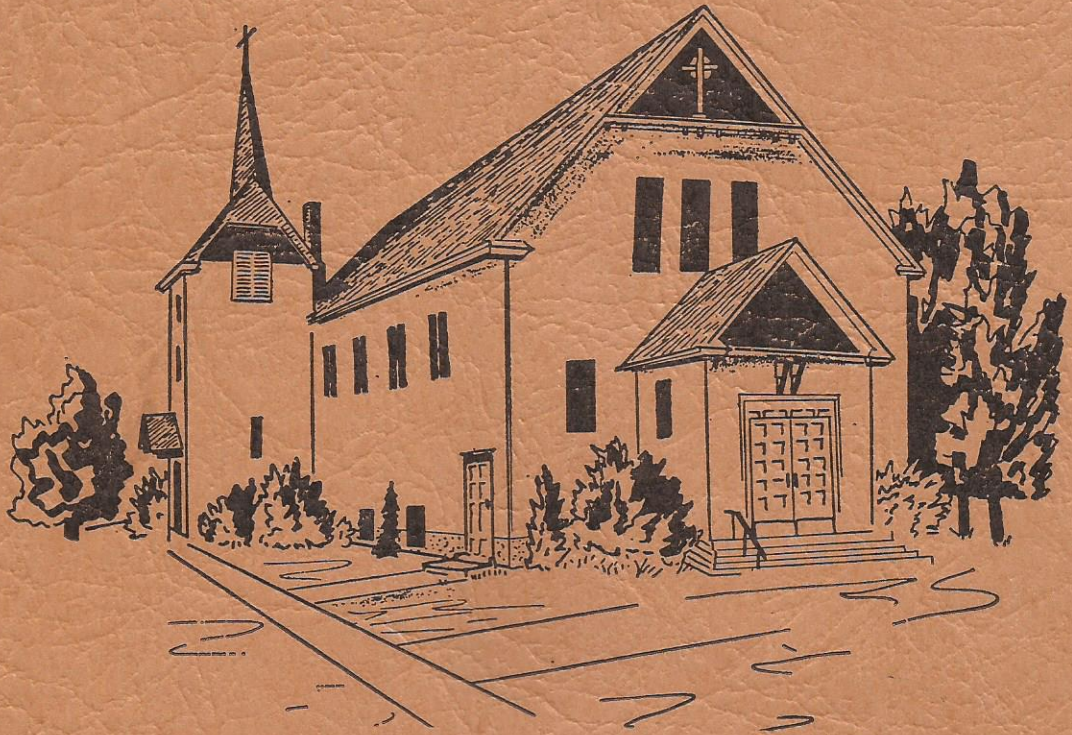


# THE 100<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

*Lu Ida Abrahamson*



Ink Drawing by James Abrahamson

## BRULE CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH

Elk Point, South Dakota

August 2, 1964

*Theme: "Faith of Our Fathers Living Still."*



# The 100th Anniversary

**Brule Creek  
Lutheran Church**

**Elk Point, South Dakota**

**August 2, 1964**

## FAITH OF OUR FATHERS, LIVING STILL

Faith of our fathers, living still  
In spite of dungeon, fire and sword,  
O how our hearts beat high with joy  
When-e'er we hear that glorious word:  
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,  
Were still in heart and conscience free;  
And blest would be their children's fate  
If they, like them, should die for thee:  
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.

Faith of our fathers! God's great pow'r  
Shall win all nations unto thee;  
And thro' the truth that comes from God  
Mankind shall then indeed be free;  
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.

Faith our fathers, we will love  
Both friend and foe in all our strife,  
And preach thee, too, as love knows how  
By kindly words and virtuous life:  
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.

**Theme Verse:** "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee."—Deuteronomy 32:7.

## Dedication

We gratefully dedicate this Centennial Booklet to the sacred memory of the God-fearing Pioneers who established the Lutheran Church on the Dakota plains and to those who have preserved the Faith of our Fathers.

## Foreword

A feeling of lack of perfection and also a surge of gratitude encounters the Committee in writing this Centennial history. Much of value historically has never been recorded. Available data has been studied and used. Sources include pastoral, congregation and church organization records; notations from the Rev. P. H. Dahl who served as pastor of the Bergen community 1896-1918; data from the Anniversary Booklet by the Rev. Walter I. Aamoth published in connection with the 75th Anniversary observance of the beginning of the preliminary organized Lutheran work in the Brule community which was celebrated Aug. 12-14, 1938; excerpts from the "Vermillion Story" published at the time of the Vermillion, S. D. Centennial in 1959; also pictures, letters, papers and newspaper clippings from many helpful contributors.

The Centennial Committee gratefully acknowledges all the assistance given them.

Mrs. George Wilken  
Mrs. Lincoln Twedt  
Mrs. Paul Quam  
Mrs. Elton Shedd  
Mrs. Elmer Quam  
Rev. Kermit Rye



# One Hundred Years Of

## Brule Creek Lutheran Church

# HISTORY

This is the history of Brule Creek Lutheran Congregation, a rural, southeastern South Dakota church located twelve miles northwest of Elk Point. We hope to introduce you in these pages to a few of the pioneers who moved westward to settle this area. One thing that can be said about these early settlers is that they brought with them a strong faith in God. From a tiny nucleus of Christians, Brule Creek Congregation, along with several others, was born.

Dakota was a part of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. It was a vast area of rolling plains, tall grass, prairies, trees and, beneath all this, fertile lands which held promise of an abundant life. This area along the Missouri River was first explored by white men during the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-06. Fur trading posts were established, and in 1859 a treaty was signed with the Indians. The region was now open to white settlers.

Prior to 1850 the first Norwegian settlement had been near LaSalle County in Illinois. At first land was cheap, but as other settlers came, land values rose. A cry went up for cheaper land. Some of the people pressed on to new frontiers—to Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. One small group felt they too must seek cheaper land with better opportunities and more freedom. So they sent a man by the name of Kjel Ronne to explore "the west" and find them a suitable location. They trusted Kjel Ronne

because he was an honest, upright, Christian man upon whose judgment they could rely.

Mr. Ronne moved west past the Mississippi to the Missouri River and north to the site of Vermillion. Here he found a wide area of fertile land with nearness of water for trade. This, he realized, would be advantageous for bringing supplies of food, implements and clothing. When Ronne returned to Illinois to report his findings he learned that his wife had died and that her burial had taken place that very afternoon.

When the group was ready to move west, Kjel Ronne guided them to this area. He was a lay preacher, and his faith in God and in the future was an inspiration to his fellow travelers. The date of this settlement can be said with certainty to be no later than 1857. Many hardships were endured. Sickness, loneliness, poverty, cold, and hunger were constant companions. There was an ever present threat from hostile Indians. Yet, these pioneers trusted God for all their needs. They came almost empty handed, but they brought with them Bibles, hymnbooks, and catechisms. They did not forget that



Kjel Ronne



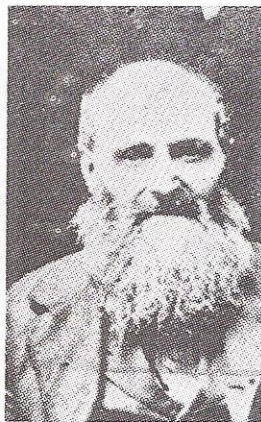
"Man cannot live by bread alone." From the beginning, prayer sessions, Bible reading and lay services were held in their homes. They possessed a faith and a courage that was not easily crushed.

In July of 1859 another small group of Norwegians from Dane County in Wisconsin traveled much the same route. At Sioux City the group traveled west along the Missouri River on the Nebraska side. They crossed the river at Vermillion but were not happy with their findings. They crossed back and moved up the river again. Recrossing a bit farther on, they "staked" land that later became known as "Meckling Town". A few names from this group are as follows: Ole Oison Gjetle, Syvert Halvorson Myren, Elling Olson Engum, Halvor Swendson, and Anders Fosen. They described their trip thus: "Grass so tall and rank that often Swendson stood on the dashboard holding on to the bow of the wagon cover so he could see where he was going. The wagon made a good path, almost as if it were a cut swath." By this time several "little settlements" dotted the land from Sioux City to beyond Yankton along the Missouri.

In 1861 Mr. Abraham Jacobson, a theological candidate who belonged to the Augustana Synod, came with a group of westward movers from Winnieshiek County, Iowa. During his stay in this area he preached the Word of God to these early settlers. At a service in the Mikkol Rokne home he baptized the twin sons (Ole and Lars) of Ole Gjetle. Mr. Jacobson is also believed to have officiated at the first wedding among the Norse of this territory, that of Kristen Jordalen and Anna Tweit.

There was some talk of founding a congregation, but Mr. Jacobson was unacceptable because he belonged to the Augustana Synod. The matter of synodical affiliation was a problem with many of the desirable pastors of that day. At this time no congregation was formed. Mr. Jacobson traded a watch for a pony and returned to Iowa. After he left, laymen continued to conduct services. Some of these men were Aslake Iversen, Peder Ronne, and Thomas Eidem.

In 1862 the Homestead Act was passed by Congress. This enabled any male who was 21 years or older to claim 160 acres of land



Steve Horton

if he would clear the timber and live on it for five years. He was expected to break a few acres of sod each year. This act induced many young adventurers to move west and settle the territory. Steve Horton (though not a Norwegian of these groups) was one of these adventurers. He took a claim in 1862, Section 34-35 of Spink Township. This is of particular interest to us since the present Brule Creek church stands on this ground. The farm from which this plot was taken is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Williams (nee Florence Horton, granddaughter of Steven Horton).

Kjel Ronne, who by this time had ventured as far as Sioux Falls, was not satisfied with what he found. Returning south along the Sioux River he took a tree claim southwest of Elk Point. Christine Ronne, the daughter of Kjel Ronne, became one of Dakota's first school teachers. She later married Carl Nelson (a brother of Mrs. Martin Anderson, the mother of Norman, Henry and Paul).

Wishing to establish a future for themselves and their children, and feeling a deep need for the Word of God in their midst, these early settlers began making plans for an organized church. On August 12, 1863, fifteen men met at the home of Kjel Ronne and proceeded to organize a congregation. They called themselves the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation. There was no written constitution, no ordained pastor, and all business transacted was of a preliminary nature.

From Rev. P. J. Reinertson's report of 1934 we find: "1) The preliminary organization of Brule Creek Evangelical Lutheran

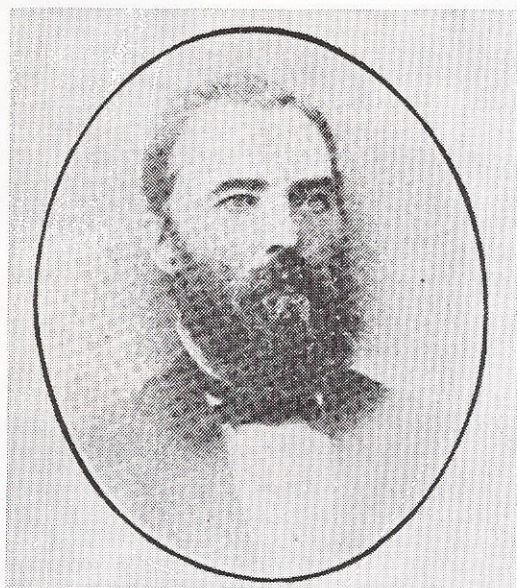


Congregation took place on August 12, 1863. 2) Regular congregational meetings were held from time to time. 3) On October 8, 1864 this organization was completed by adopting a constitution and electing a board of trustees." From Rev. Walter Aamoth (1934) we read: "For this reason I include these churches, Bergen, Vangen, and Brule Creek as having their origin in that first preliminary organization of August 12, 1863. All these congregations should regard this first meeting as their real beginning."

These were hard days. They surely must have taxed the strength and vigor of youth. But youth they had. It could be said that this was truly a movement of youth. These bearded young men brought with them

wives, many of whom were still in their teens. Records show that even the Synodical leaders of that day were in most cases men in their late twenties and early thirties. We of a much later time cannot cease to marvel at the courage, endurance, and strength of these early settlers. That they wanted the church and its ministrations, that they were intensely concerned about synodical affiliations—these are indications that difficulties had not broken their spirits, nor hardships erased their keen hunger for a correct hearing of the Word of God. This keen theological concern is evidenced by a report that the Rev. P. H. Dahl gives as to how Rev. Krohn came to be their mission pastor.

## Jens Ivarson Krohn (1864-1867)



Jens Ivarson Krohn

There had been a meeting held in the home of Jacob Jacobson in which a lively discussion was carried on as to which synod should be approached to request a pastor. Finally it was decided to ask the Norwegian Synod in Chicago. Rev. Krohn came to visit the settlement in the fall of 1864.

Not much is known of this early mis-

sionary pastor who helped organize the congregation and served as its first formal Shepherd. Records show that he was born and educated in Norway, coming to the United States at the age of 26 years. He had immediately sought more schooling and was graduated from Concordia Seminary of St. Louis, Missouri in 1863. He served a Chicago church for the next 13 years. It was in this period that he was sent out on more than one occasion to be a missionary pastor in the Dakota Territory.

At the time of his first visit in the fall of 1864 he was about 30 years old. He was newly married or married after his return to Chicago (records tell of his marriage in 1864). During the course of this visit he preached several times and performed many ministerial acts. In all, he performed a total of 45 baptisms in two days.

There is a day to which we must call special attention. On October 8, 1864, Pastor Krohn conducted a service at the home of Anders Peterson Ulven on the "Vermillion Prairie" at which 22 persons were baptized. But it was following the service that a meeting was held which resulted in the historic establishment of the Norwegian Evangelical Congregation in Dakota Territory. A new



constitution was drawn up and adopted. Organized in the Name of the Triune God, it was to be a congregation of the Norwegian Synod. Rev. Krohn proceeded to affiliate the new congregation with the Norwegian Synod. Trustees were elected which included: Helge Matthiasson, Aslake Iverson, Ole Sampson (Opheim), Peter Nilson, and Lars Fanestol. Hans Gunderson was elected as "an assistant". The newly formed congregation consisted of 67 members.

Rev. Krohn returned to Chicago, but he visited the area again to conduct services, administer the sacraments, and perform pastoral duties as they were needed. Services were conducted in homes, many of which were only dugouts or soddies, or in the out of doors. It is pathetic to hear of the funeral memorials conducted for those who had died earlier at a time when there was no pastor available. In the absence of a pastor, burial had been a simple rite performed by the family and some lay preacher neighbor. Diphtheria, a type of dysentery, and "consumption" were the most recorded causes of death.

In 1865 the congregation's official name was altered to be "The First Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Dakota Territory." This congregation embraced an area comprising the counties of Union, Clay and Yankton. At the request of settlers beyond the limits of the congregation, Rev. Krohn visited and served families as far west as the James River Settlement where it is recorded he preached in Torger Nelson's house.

Not much is known of Pastor Krohn after his visits to this area. He lost his young wife in 1868 and he himself died in 1889 at the age of 55 years. The rigors of the new land may have contributed to his early death. The records of Pastor Krohn's ministry are preserved and kept by the Vangen congregation at Mission Hill. Records show that he received for his services in 1864, \$185, and at his return in 1865, \$186.

At a meeting on February 11, 1866 in Peter Nelson's house, congregational officers were elected. They were as follows: Lars J.

Ruud (Brule Creek Settlement), secretary, and Aslake Iverson, treasurer. The desire to seek a permanent pastor increased. At a meeting in February in Syvert Myron's house it was decided to send a call for a permanent pastor to the Synodical Council in behalf of the young congregation.

## Emil Christensen (1867-69)



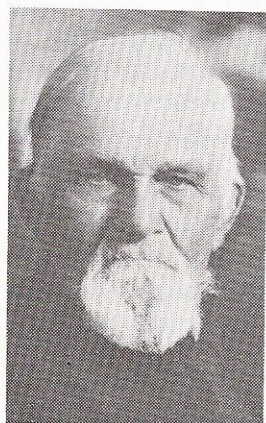
Emil Christensen

In the fall of 1867 the Rev. Emil Christensen came to serve this large area. It was found necessary to divide into three districts with the pastor's time shared equally. The East District became known as Brule Creek, the Central District as Bergen, and the West District as Vangen. Later the East District divided into three congregations known as Brule Creek, Lodi, and Clay Creek.



Brule Creek members recorded at this time (1867) were:

Peder Pederson, Arne Olson, Solfest Anderson, Jens Olson, Eric Christenson, Anders Erickson, Paul Solfest, Anders Anderson, Oie, Ole Holthe, O. Olson, Torger Larson, Syver Olson, Klement Halvorson, Ole Thorson and G. Agenberg. On January 1, 1868 there was a voting membership of 22.



Lars Larson

This number increased to 29 on January 29; to 63 on September 2 and by March of 1869 membership stood at 79. *13 men later*

One of the families that came to play an active part in the congregation at this time was that of Lars Larsen, Sr. His three sons, Lars Jr., Johannes, and Guldbrand, had come to Dane County, Wisconsin in 1858. But seven years later, Lars Jr., having returned to Norway, brought his father, his step mother, and younger children to the United States. In all, he furnished fare for about 25 persons, mostly relatives. Fare cost \$25 for adults, half price for children. Each person had to provide his own food and bedding. The voyage usually took a month or more.



Gilbert Larson



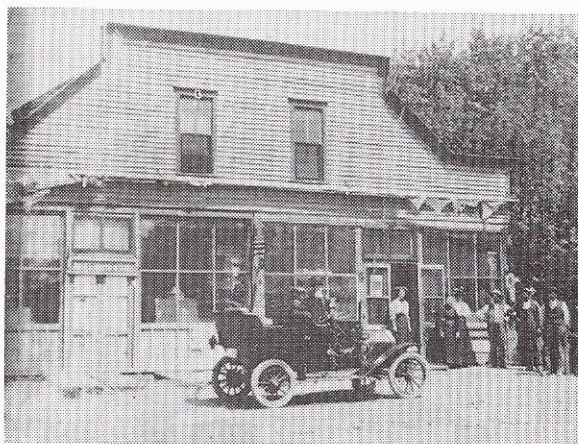
John Larson

In November of 1867 Lars Larson, Jr. filed a homestead claim in Spink Township. He married Ellen Helseth in 1871. There were nine children born to this marriage:

Sophie (Satter), Adolph L., Betsy (Peterson-Lindgren), J. Martin, Olivia (Peterson), and Lissie (Anderson). Four younger children died in a diphtheria epidemic.

In 1867 following release from the Union Army, John (Johannes) Larson came to Dakota Territory and took a claim on the present site of Spink. He married Ingeborg Linaas. They had seven children: Albert, Andrew, Edward, Sophie (Braastad), Anna (Klopstad), Ida (Klopstad), and Lizzie (Abrahamson). John opened a general store at Spink in 1871. A postoffice was added in 1872 and he served as postmaster for 23 years.

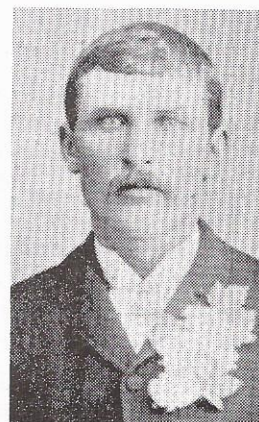
*Norman's grandpa*



The Early Spink Store

Gilbert (Guldbrand) Larson was schoolmaster in one of the first schools in the area. His home was a cellar house on the banks of the Brule Creek, a stone's throw west of the present church. This home served also as a schoolhouse.

A younger brother, Edward, who was 6 years old when he came to this country lived his entire life on the farm homesteaded by his father, Lars Sr. Edward married Mary Braastad and they had eight children: Ludwig, Edward, M. Sophie, Lars J., Helmer, George, Mina (Waag), and John W.



Edward Larson

*Leading Elder's Sophie's Dad*

*Mina & Sophie only living daughters of 1st Larson's*

*Jm's father*



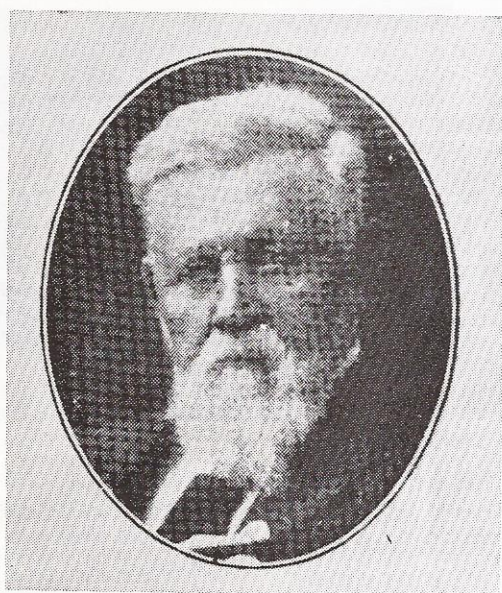
Other settlers arriving about this time were Andrew Omdahl, Ole Christensen, Andrew Lewison, Gunder Satter, Peter Christensen and Emil Pederson. These men held many offices in the early church to promote the work of the Kingdom of God.

Of interest is the story of the settlement of Lodi. Spurred by the hope of a railroad coming through, it was in the year 1868 a thriving village with a grist mill, two stores, two harness shops, a hotel, a school building, two churches, and a saloon. When

the railroad did not come through the village became nonexistent.

Rev. Christensen was a young, energetic missionary over a large area. He visited the early settled counties of Lincoln, Minnehaha, Moody, and Brookings in Dakota Territory. He also served in Cedar and Dixon Counties in Nebraska. He and his young wife made their home near Gayville. Records show that after Pastor Christensen's two years with Brule Creek, he continued serving as pastor in the Gayville area until 1876.

## Ellef Olson (1869-73)

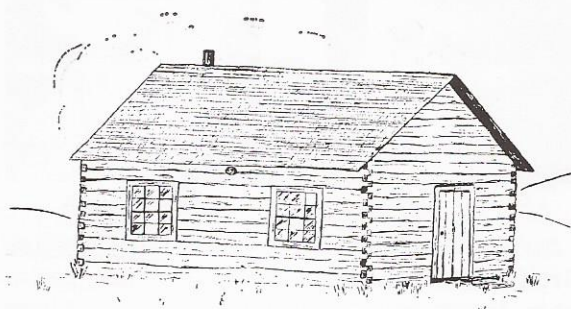


Ellef Olson

The Rev. Ellef Olson was the next pastor to serve Brule Creek and the area around Vermillion. He arrived in 1869 and minutes of that year show that meetings were held in the Amund Iverson home on October 13 and November 14 and 21, and in the Andreas Erikson home on December 12 and 19. On December 12, communion was received by Andreas A. Oie, Brite Ingbrete Oie, Lars O. Skjeie, Lisabet Olsdatter Skjeie, Nils Rangsholdt, Simon Johnson, Rasmus Otteson, and Ellen Janette Otteson. A total of twenty-six services were recorded for the year 1869. A few meetings were mentioned as being

held at Union Creek, later organized as the Swedish Lutheran Church of the Augustana Synod. The first marriage on record was that of Christian Benson, age 45, and Anna Syversdatter Dale, age 33. Witnesses were Andreas Erikson, Amund Iverson, and Arne Olson. The first baptism was that of Alette Christine Olson, a child of Jens and Martha Olson, on October 13, 1869. The first burial recorded was in July of 1870, a daughter of Solfest and Gurrine Anderson. Records show seven deaths from diphtheria in 1873. A plot of ground had been given by Knudt Paulson as a burial place for departed loved ones.

By this time people had begun thinking in terms of a central place for worship. In 1870, they resolved to build a log church building. It was to be near the cemetery. It is believed that construction was actually begun when they decided to use a site farther north. The new site seemed to be nearer the center of the area to be served by the



The First Church of 1873



church. It was on the farm of A.O. Solem (father of Mrs. Gust Abraham) about half a mile south of the Gust Abraham home.

The log church was not completed at this time. There could have been many rea-

sons for delay—the use of unskilled labor, the scarcity of money, etc. In 1870 the congregation authorized Ole Anderson and John Larson to secure a loan of \$100 to be paid back in installments.

Membership of the congregation in 1871 was as follows (The names added are of descendants now belonging to this church with exceptions marked by an \*asterisk):

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Anders Erickson,              | (  |
| 2. Solfest Erickson, and         | (uncles of Carrie Helseth, Anna Quam, and *Minnie Hofland              |
| 3. Solfest Anderson              | (  |
| 4. Paul Solfeston                | (great grandfather of Arnold and *Lloyd Helseth, *Mildred Holzer-      |
|                                  | ( land, Edna Lundgren, Howard Powell, Alma Nygaard, Evelyn             |
|                                  | ( Shedd, Norrell Quam, *Helen Murray, Burnett Quam, Paul               |
|                                  | ( Quam, *Alice Albin, *Dorothy Anderson, *Merlin Hofland, *Till-       |
|                                  | ( man and *Merlow Anderson, *Florence Jacobs, *Donna Belle Moe         |
| 5. Jens Olson                    | (father of *Jim Olson, grandfather of Mrs. Della Abraham               |
| 6. Anders Oie                    | (father of Ingvar Anderson, grandfather of Mabel and Art Anderson      |
|                                  | (father of Tom Anderson, grandfather of Albert J. Anderson             |
|                                  | (father of Mrs. O. Torguson, grandfather of Lena Kopstad, Tina         |
|                                  | ( Williams, and Ida Johnson  |
|                                  | (father of Andrew Anderson   |
| 7. P. Pederson                   | (father of Emil Pederson, grandfather of *Ira Pederson                 |
| 8. Arne Olson                    | (granduncle of *Gena Price   |
| 9. Rasmus Otteson                | (maternal grandmother of <u>Lewis Helseth</u> <i>great grandmother</i> |
| 10. Gunder Satter                | (father of Gust, grandfather of Lewis, *Wm., *John, and *Ann Satter,   |
|                                  | ( *Ellen DeGroot, *Grace, *Ida   |
| 11. Aron Jonason                 |  |
| 12. Ole Stubhaug                 | (paternal grandfather of Mrs. Gust Abraham                             |
| 13. Amund Iverson                | (grandfather of *Amedia Lee, great grandfather of *Martin Albin,       |
|                                  | ( great great grandfather of Maxine Bird                               |
| 14. Lars Larson, Sr.             | (paternal grandfather of J. Martin Larson, Oliva Peterson              |
| 15. John Larson <i>Johannes</i>  | (father of Anna Klopstad, paternal grandfather of Myrtle Twedt and     |
| <i>married Ingelborg Linnaas</i> | ( *John E. Larson, *Alice Andersen, *Arnold Klopstad; maternal         |
|                                  | ( grandfather of Norman, *Leo, *Philip, *Lewis Abraham, *Dorothy       |
|                                  | ( Robinson, *Alvena Blackstone   |
| 16. Simon Johnson                |  |
| 17. Peder Syverson               |  |
| 18. Christian Pederson           | (brother of Emil Pederson  |
| 19. O. T. Oye                    | (thought to be the father of A. O. Anderson                            |
| 20. O. Anderson                  |  |
| 21. Anfin Anfinson               | (father of Lewis and Andrew Anfinson                                   |
| 22. Ole Johanneson               |  |
| 23. Knudt Paulson                | (paternal grandfather of *Mrs. Oluf Kjose, *Mrs. Joe Eidem and         |
|                                  | ( *Lee Paulson   |
| 24. Christian Olson Nyhus        |  |
| 25. Ole Torguson                 | (father of Ida Johnson, Tina Williams and Lena Klopstad                |
| 26. Torgus Johnson               | (father of Ole Torguson, grandfather of Lena Klopstad, Ida Johnson     |
|                                  | ( and Tina Williams  |
| 27. Anders Solfeston             | (brother of Paul Solfeston, grandfather of Norman, Henry, Paul and     |
|                                  | ( *Elmer Anderson, *Elvena Albert, *Mable Ruppert, *Alma Fakes         |
| 28. Syver Syverson               |  |
| 29. Arndt Urdahl                 |  |



# NAMES ADDED MARCH 5, 1871

- 30. Lars Odegarden
- 31. Lars Larson, Jr. (father of J. Martin Larson and \*Oliva Peterson)
- 32. Gunder Johnson Helseth (cousin of Lewis Helseth's father)
- 33. Peder Pederson Ehre
- 34. Johannes Lee (father of \*Amedia Lee, great grandfather of Maxine Bird)

# NAMES ADDED MARCH 10, 1871

- 35. Ove Olson
- 36. Clement Halderson
- 37. Halder Clementson (great grandfather of \*Herbert Clementson)
- 38. Peder Erickson
- 39. John Olson
- 40. Andrew Anderson Dalager (uncle of A. O. Anderson)
- 41. Tosten Johnson
- 42. Erik Erikson
- 43. Erick Erickson (grandfather of \*Ed Hofland)
- 44. Ole Herreid (father of Martin Herreid, grandfather of \*Les Herreid)
- 45. Hans Johnson (father of \*Ed Johnson, grandfather of \*Harley Lewison, \*Hilma ( and \*Orville Johnson)
- 46. Anders Anderson (thought to be the same as Anders Oie)
- 47. Syneva Andersdatter Oie (sister of Anders Anderson, mother of Tina Williams, Ida Johnson, ( Lena Klopstad; grandmother of Forrest Williams and Amber ( Jervik, \*Ruth Johnson, \*Bernice Carpender)
- 48. Mattias Olson Stubhaug (son of No. 12)
- 49. Ludvig Olson Stubhaug (son of No. 12)
- 50. Anders Solfeston (same as No. 27)
- 51. Andreas Amundson
- 52. Eric Olson

On May 4, 1883, the first service was held in the new log church. The text used was from John 16:16-23. Names of new members received that day are as follows:

- 53. Lasse Olson (father of Mrs. Halvor Lewison, \*Ole Olson)
- 54. Anders Lassesson (father of Arthur Lewison)
- 55. Marie Boe
- 56. Anders Boe
- 57. Peder Anfinson (brother of Anfin Anfinson)
- 58. Erick Nelson (father of Nora Anderson, grandfather of Norman, Henry, Paul and ( \*Elmer Anderson, \*Alvena Albert, \*Mable Ruppert, \*Alma Fakes)
- 59. Gunder Syverson
- 60. Peder Christianson
- 61. Peder Bonefield (uncle of Edward, Helmer, Sophie, and John W. Larson and \*Mina ( Waag)

# OTHER NAMES ADDED LATER

- Lars Offerdahl (grandfather of Lloyd Offerdahl)
- Johanna Nygard (mother of Letta Nygard, grandmother of Clifford and \*Howard ( Nygard)
- Hans Peter Johnson (father of Mrs. Hilma Carroll, \*Mrs. Gerhart Grothe and Oscar and ( Ovidia Johnson, recently deceased.)
- Hendrick Johnson (father of Bertha Marple and grandfather of Elvera Wilken, \*Everett ( Marple, Melvin, \*Howard, and \*Roy Nelson, \*Elvena Hines
- Iver Quam (father of Nels Quam, grandfather of Paul, Elmer, Burnette, Norrell ( Quam, Evelyn Shedd, Mabel and Arthur Anderson, \*Helen Murry, ( \*Alice Albin, \*Agnes Erickson)
- Noah Swanson (father of Mrs. Arthur Lewison, Manning and Lester Swanson)



Abraham Olson

(grandfather of Roy, Hjalmer, Adolph Clarence, \*Ole, \*Edward,  
( \*Leonard Abraham, \*Alvira Rusten, Violet Sand, \*Marie Ronnei,  
( \*Alma Clausen, \*Oleva Sommervold, \*Petra Sommervold, \*Min-  
( nie Halvorson, \*Ida Solaas. (Children of Peter Abraham)  
(grandfather of Olaf, \*Oscar, \*Martin, \*Adolph and \*Reggie Abra-  
( hamson, Agnes Peterson, \*Betty Green. (children of Ole Abra-  
( hamson)

(grandfather of Gust, Albert, \*Richard, \*Edwin, \*George Abraham,  
( \*Laura and \*Anna Ronning, \*Gladys Abraham, \*Eleanor Claus-  
( sen, \*Evelyn Jolin. (children of Andrew Abraham)

(grandfather of Norman, \*Lewis, \*Philip, \*Leo Abrahamson, \*Doro-  
( thy Robinson, \*Alvena Blackstone. (children of Andreas Abra-  
( hamson)

Ole Christenson  
Edward Larson

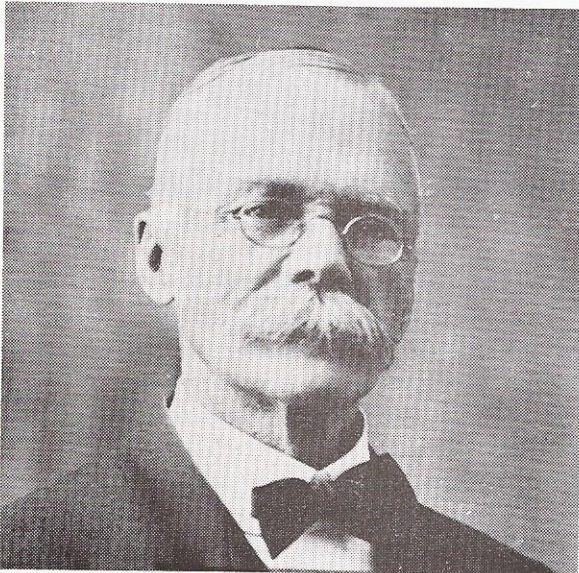
(maternal grandfather of Peter Abraham children

(father of Edward M., Helmer, Sophie, John W. Larson and \*Mina  
( Waag

Ole Olson

(father of Alf Olson, grandfather of LeVern Quam, \*Amber Leber

## Olaus Augustus Normann (1873-1879)



Olaus Augustus Normann

The Rev. O. A. Normann, then 28 years old, answered a call to serve this area. Like so many of his predecessors he was educated at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, and at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. He lived in Sioux City and traveled to these settlements on the open prairie. It is said of Pastor Normann that he would put his hand to any task. He was often found in harvest helping farmers reaping and threshing grain, or per-

forming any work that needed to be done.

An account has been preserved which Rev. Normann had written. It describes the dedication service of the first Brule Creek Cemetery and a mission festival presided over by Rev. Emil Christensen who at that time was permanent pastor living near Gayville and serving that area. The cemetery was a tract of land located on the Knudt Paulson farm. The dedication took place Sept. 3, 1874. Quoting Pastor Normann, "The cemetery had quickly grown too small, caused by the many sudden deaths from diphtheria and other diseases. Now it has been enlarged, cleaned, and decorated as nicely as the meager resources of the congregation allowed." Rev. Christensen preached on the text Luke 2:25-32 which includes that beautiful prayer prayed by Simeon. He had seen the infant Jesus whom he recognized as his Lord and Savior. This was a climax to his life and a preparation for death.

Following a picnic dinner in a nearby grove, the afternoon services were held out of doors. This service had a mission theme. It was followed by an offering to be given to the poor and needy settlers of Minnesota and Iowa. It seems that many of these people had lost their crops from a grasshopper in-



vation. The offering was \$52.80. When aware of the limited resources of those times, one is impressed by the degree of compassion they expressed towards their less fortunate brethren.

Services held by Rev. Normann were not always on Sundays. Records show that the families gathered for services any day of the week when the pastor was able to come. He had a large area to cover. In 1876

seven services are listed in the first five months of the year. All were held in the three-year old log church. The grasshoppers had come again. All but the early grain was consumed by them. About one third of the grain was harvested. The records are scant on the latter part of Rev. Normann's work here. He departed in 1879 to serve at Ashby, Minnesota, where he remained for forty years.

## Elling Olearius Dale (1880-1905)

Pastor Dale arrived from Jewell, Kansas where he had served as a circuit riding missionary preacher for six years. Like many pioneer families they had lost their entire family of four children in a diphtheria plague in Kansas. Rev. Dale filed claim to a quarter section of land (Section 35) in Spink Township, northwest of the Brule Creek Church. This was to be his home for the rest of his life. He served preaching places at Lodi, Rockfield, and Clay Creek. He usually made these trips on horseback but sometimes was compelled to ski across the prairies because of heavy snowfalls.

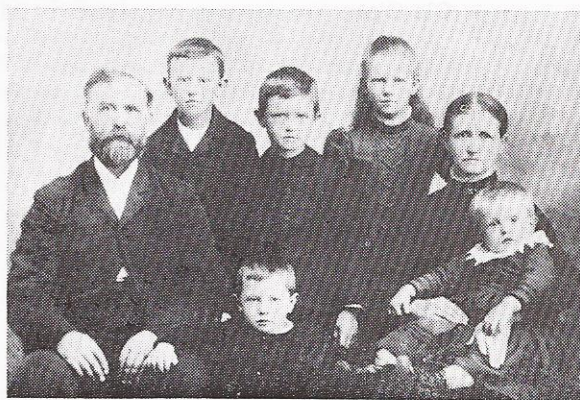
The log church built in 1873 had become too small. Following the pattern of the early churches in "Acts"



Hannah Solem

the congregation had grown steadily. By 1881 plans were under way for a church building. The proposal was voted on March 5, 1883 to erect a frame building 28' by 48' by 16'. On the building committee were John Larson, Knute Paulson, Anders Erickson, Emil Omdahl, Ole

Herreid and Hans P. Johnson. Gilbert Larson was the carpenter and Jorgen Hansen was the mason. In the fall of 1883 the cornerstone was laid. By the summer of 1884 the church was put into use, but it was not until



Rev. Elling Dale and Family

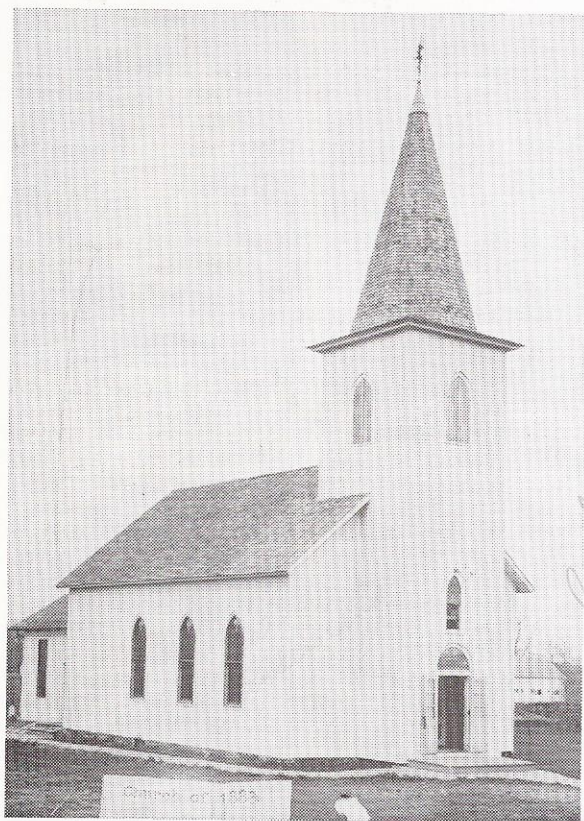
1885 that it was completed and dedicated.

Knute Paulson often led the congregational singing. There was no musical accompaniment. Some time later a reed organ was purchased. The first organist was Hannah



The Dale Home





Church of 1883

Solem. Miss Solem resides at the Bethesda Home and at this writing is 98 years old.

In 1896 the church bell was installed. It's beautiful tones have pealed the joys and sorrows of Brule Creek for the past sixty-eight years.

These years record a period of struggles and hardships. Food was scarce. Cornbread was the main food. Peas and wheat were roasted for coffee. There was little or no meat. The value of a quarter of land dropped from five or six thousand to less than two hundred dollars. The winter of 1881 was called the "hard winter". A three day blizzard in October brought snow to a ten foot level. Ice on the Missouri was three feet thick. Fuel was not to be found. It is told that Mr. McCabe of Lodi first burned his furniture and then his stable for fuel and brought his horses into the house to keep them from freezing to death. Many burned corn and small grain for fuel. Following the winter came the disastrous floods. On the Vermill-

ion Prairie a Mr. Swendson almost lost his life trying to walk home the eight miles from Vermillion to Meckling on the partially frozen waters. Mrs. Swendson had placed a light in a window of their home to guide him.

In this period of want and poverty, Pastor Dale taught and encouraged these pioneers to retain their faith in God that they might receive strength and inward peace.

In 1894 Mrs. John Larson had returned from a visit to Dane County, Wisconsin where she learned about an organization of women who promoted the cause of missions in the church. Her enthusiasm brought action. Assisted by Mrs. Dale a meeting in the Dale home June 28, 1894 led to the organization of the Brule Creek "Kvindeforening". A constitution was written and adopted. Knute Paulson was acting chairman and Rev. Dale, acting secretary. The following ladies became charter members: Mrs. Lars Larson, Mrs. Iver Quam, Mrs. Gust Satter, Mrs. Elling Dale, Brite Oie, Mrs. John Larson, Mrs. Andrew Helseth, Mrs. Lars Braastad, Mrs. Emil Pederson, Mrs. Anders Anderson, Mrs. Abraham Olson and Mrs. Knute Paulson. Mrs. Lars Larson was elected president and it is most interesting to note that she was president for 12 consecutive years and with a few exceptions was president most of the time for 22 years until her death in 1916. Mrs. Iver Quam became the first treasurer and Mrs. Gust Satter the first secretary. At the second meeting eight more ladies joined the new society, one of



Mrs. Lars Larson

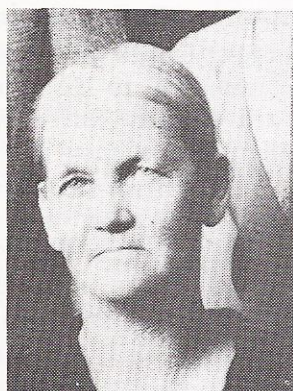


Knute Paulson





Mrs. Lars Larson



Mrs. Gust Satter



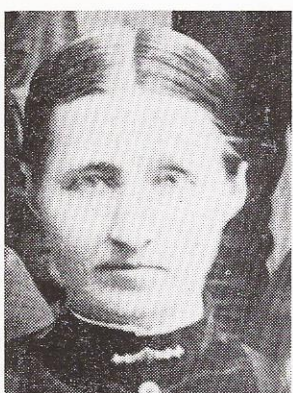
Brita Anderson



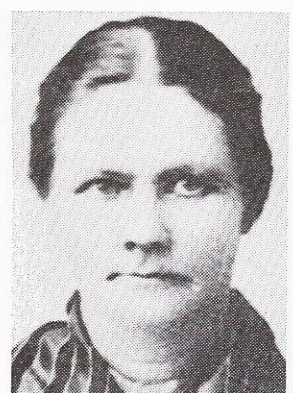
Mrs. Ivar Quam



Mrs. Elling Dale



Mrs. John Larson



Mrs. Andrew Helseth



Mrs. Andrew Anderson



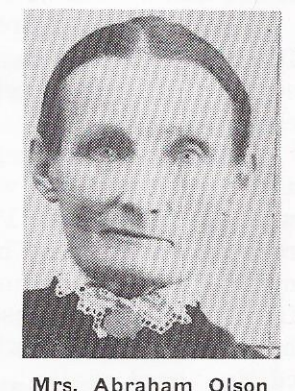
Mrs. Lars Braastad



Mrs. Emil Pederson



Mrs. Knudt Paulson



Mrs. Abraham Olson

whom was Mrs. Marie Larson. She at this writing is 91 years old.

Sometime during the period in which the new frame church was being built, the cemetery was relocated just south of it on a tract of land given by Gilbert Larson. A

fence was erected around it. Subscriptions to pay for the fence were received in the amounts of 25¢ and 50¢. There was one contribution of \$1.00.

At about this time the first choir was organized by Ole Abrahamson. He both di-



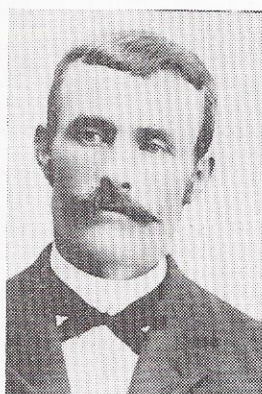
		25 June '94	12 July '94	26 July '94	7 Aug '94	23 Aug '94
1	Mrs. J. Paulson	15	10	10		20
2	" L. Larson	15	10	10	10	10
3	" L. Sathu	15	10	10	10	10
4	" L. Kuam	15	10	10		20
5	" John Larson	15			30	10
6	" L. Braastad	15		20	10	
7	" Brute Anderson	15				40
8	" Andrus Anderson	15				
9	" Abraham Olson	15	10	10	10	
10	" Anders Helseth	15	10	10	10	10
11	" E. Dale	15	10	10	10	10
12	" Emil Pederson	15	10	10	10	10
13	" Berthe Christensen	15		20	10	
14	" Edw. Larson		10	10	10	
15	" H. P. Johnson		15		20	10
16	" O. T. Johnson		15	10		20
17	" O. Anderson		15			30
18	" Caroline Kuam		15	10		20
19	" Sarah C. Berg		15			
20	" H. S. Rue		15			

The First Minutes in Original Handwriting — 1894

ected the choir and accompanied on the violin. He also led the hymn singing of the congregation. Because of failing health Rev. Dale tendered his resignation to the three



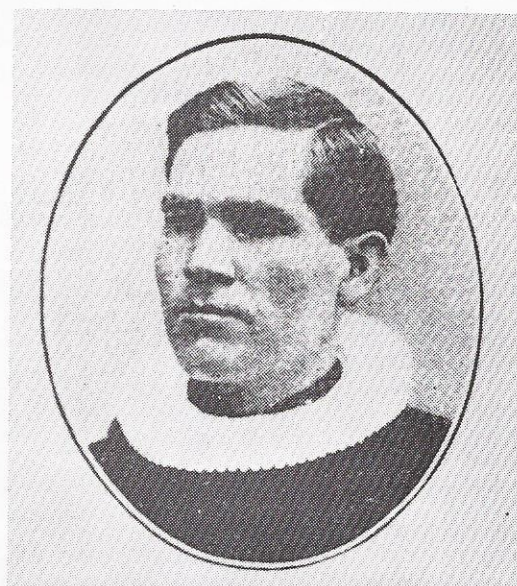
Marie Larson, Oldest Living Member, 91



Ole Abrahamson

congregations he had served for 25 years. An excerpt from Rev. Dale's history laid in the Brule Creek Church cornerstone and a fitting tribute to Pastor Dale's ministry is a passage from Psalm 126 — "May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy! He that goes forth weeping bearing the seeds for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bearing his sheaves with him." One of his granddaughters, Mrs. Lincoln (Myrtle) Twedt, is a member of the congregation.

## Halvor Syverson Rue (1905-1910)



Halvor Syverson Rue

The Rev. H. S. Rue came to serve the area in 1905. It was during this time that the parish (Brule Creek, Lodi and Clay Creek) purchased a parsonage in Vermillion. This continued to be the pastor's home until 1917. Also purchased during this pastorate were the altar, pulpit and baptismal font for the Brule Creek Church. These pieces were later transferred to the new structure built in 1933 and are still in use.



Pastor Rue left the parish in 1910 to accept a call to Prairie Farm, Wisconsin.

## Christian Findahl (1911-1918)



Christian Findahl

The Rev. and Mrs. Findahl and their family came in 1911 to serve Brule Creek.

Pastor and Mrs. Findahl were warm, friendly people, both musically gifted. The pastor proved to be a fine teacher, having taught 22 years in high school before entering the seminary to prepare for the ministry. He was 51 years old when he graduated and this was his first parish. The Findahl daughters helped in the parish as organists and with parochial instruction. Parochial School was usually a three month assignment during the summer and the salary was around \$35 per month.

In 1916 the trustees were empowered to buy a furnace for the church. A big step in church affairs was the synodical merger which took place in Minneapolis in 1917. In this merger three synods joined: the Hauge, the United, and the Norwegian Synods. They became the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Together with many other churches in the land, the Brule Creek Church bell rang out at an appointed time in recognition of this significant event. A big day for Brule Creek came in 1916 when a committee was asked to compare prices on pipe organs and to arrange for a fund to help purchase one. The committee was composed of J. M.



Looking East From The Church





A Funeral at Brule Creek

Larson, Carl Pederson, Albert Quam, and Lewis Satter.

The meetings of the Ladies Aid and Helping Hand Society (young unmarried women) met regularly every other Thursday, usually in the homes of members. The two groups met and divided for separate meetings, then joined again at coffee time. There are few records from this period, but one report in 1916 records 32 members in the Ladies Aid. Dues were paid and a "collection" taken at each meeting.

There was discussion of re-forming parish lines and a special congregational meeting was called in April of 1918. The decision was made to dissolve the old parish of Brule Creek, Lodi, and Clay Creek Churches. Brule Creek was to form a new parish with St. Paul. The committee elected to handle the necessary details consisted of J. M. Larson, Iver Quam, Andrew Abraham, Carl A. Peterson, and Ingvard Anderson. When details were resolved the dissolution dates were set: May 17, 1918 for Lodi, May 18 for

Clay Creek, and May 20 for Brule Creek. This was the termination of a long and friendly Christian fellowship.

To facilitate the parish realignments, Pastor Findahl offered to resign. He did continue serving until the new pastor arrived. The congregation bade him and his family a regretful farewell. However, our connections with the Findahl family were not completely severed. Edna, the youngest daughter, became the wife of T. P. Solem who is professor of theology at Luther Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. The Rev. and Mrs. Solem have a home less than a quarter of a mile from the church on the old Solem homestead. They return each summer to this area.

In June of 1918 the committees of Brule Creek and St. Paul met to complete parish union agreements and to call a pastor. The Brule Creek members were J. M. Larson, Iver Quam, Ingvard Anderson, Carl A. Peterson, Andrew Abraham and P. O. Paulson.



## A. J. Bergsaker (1918-1924)



A. J. Bergsaker

The Rev. A. J. Bergsaker of Dell Rapids, South Dakota accepted the call and arrived in the fall of 1918. He was installed in December by District President Boe. The Bergsaker family moved into the St. Paul parsonage (the present home of the Donald Hanson family) and Brule Creek agreed to pay their share in rent.

Rev. Bergsaker presided at the annual meeting on January 6, 1919. The minutes of the meeting record that J. M. Larson, the organist, was to be paid \$6 for his services for the past six months, B. S. Klopstad, the klokker, was to be paid \$10, and Emil Pederson, the janitor, was to have his salary raised to \$35. A motion was made to sell the Parsonage in Vermillion. A committee consisting of Carl Peterson, Albert Quam, J. M. Larson, and Adolph Larson was authorized to buy a pipe organ. By this time the organ fund totaled over \$1,200. The organ was installed and dedicated in September of 1919.

The organizational meeting of the Luther League was held October 5, 1919 with Rev. Bergsaker presiding. It was called

"Ungdoms Forening" (Young People's Meeting). Albert Klopstad was elected as the first secretary and J. M. Larson, the first treasurer. The collection at the first meeting was \$12.85.

There was considerable need for a light plant which could power the blower for the pipe organ. A committee gathered gifts amounting to \$586 for this purpose. An excavation was made beneath the church and a new Cushman plant was installed.

The year 1919 marks the beginning of Sunday School. Adolph L. Larson was the first Superintendent. The first year there were 20 sessions. Records show three months of Vacation Bible School with three teachers.

On May 13, 1920, Immanuel Congregation of Elk Point asked to share the pastoral services of Rev. Bergsaker. He consented to provide this service and Brule Creek and St. Paul voted in favor of the arrangement. The union of the three churches gave St. Paul one-half of the services and Brule Creek and Immanuel each one-fourth. St. Paul was to pay \$1,000 of the salary and Brule Creek and Immanuel \$500 each.

It was in 1921 that Brule Creek Aid (no



St. Paul Parsonage



longer "Kvindeforening") voted to join the Women's Missionary Federation. Membership at that time numbered 33. In the year 1924 the constitution of the Women's group was changed from Norwegian into English. That year the ladies gave \$252.57 in mission boxes. In the files there is a bill of lading dated November 8, 1919, showing that barrels of "old clothes" were shipped from Westfield, Iowa to New York. It is signed by

Alf Olson.

Pastor Bergsaker was a vivacious and sincere man, not only serving the people of this large area, but calling on and ministering to the sick regardless of which parish they were members. When Pastor Bergsaker was appointed Secretary of the South Dakota District, he tendered his resignation to the churches. It was with regret that the parish accepted his resignation.



Arrival of Pipe Organ

## C. B. Runsvold (1924-1930)



C. B. Runsvold

The Rev. C. B. Runsvold, with his wife and two children, Carol and Sylvia, came to serve Brule Creek, St. Paul, and Immanuel Congregations in August of 1924.

During the years 1922-1928 an annual Fourth of July gathering was held in the Edward Larson grove which was sponsored by Brule Creek Church. As they did not have as many social events then as we do today, people came from miles around to participate. A band was hired, a fine speaker secured, ball games and various races were provided for entertainment, and a chicken supper was served. It was not uncommon for receipts at a one day event of this kind to run as high at \$1,500.

By this time the English language was replacing the Norwegian in everyday con-





*Recent Picture of Brule Creek*

*Early Gather*







## *Lutheran Church Congregation*

### *ing and Picnic*







Interior of Church of 1883

versation. And it was slowly, and with some reluctance on the part of the older members, replacing the Norsk in Church as well. At first, English services held once a month. By 1926 they were held every other Sunday. By 1927, all business meetings were conducted in English.

The Luther League was very active at this time, but so far no constitution had been adopted. On May 30, 1926, a committee was chosen to formulate one. Mrs. Alf Olson, J.

M. Larson, and Rev. Runsvold made up the committee.

There were times when travel by motor vehicle became almost impossible because of the mud roads. Therefore, upon the motion of Andrew Abraham (father of Gust and Albert) the church paid \$100 towards the graveling of the road just west of the church.

Rev. Runsvold served the congregation until June of 1930.

## Walter I. Aamoth (1930-1941)

Rev. Walter Aamoth arrived early in 1930 to work in the three-church parish. It was decided that the new pastor and his family should live in Elk Point where a house was rented for them.

In 1920 it was considered advisable to translate the constitution of the congregation into English because many of the younger members neither understood nor spoke Norwegian. It is interesting to note that

*Andrew A.  
gravelled rd.  
w/ church*



statistics for Brule Creek record that from 1864 to 1930 there had been 495 souls baptized in the Name of the Triune God, 385 had been confirmed, and there had been 200 burials. The total membership in 1930 was 211. The office of sacristan was dropped in 1931. Adolph L. Larson was the last to hold this office.

At the annual meeting of 1931, it was discussed at some length whether the old church should be remodeled or a new church built. In February a committee went to work to see what could be done. Ludvig Larson, Gust Abraham and William Horton were committee members who investigated the possibilities. They reported that it would be inadvisable to remodel, so plans went ahead to build a new church. Thorvald Thorson of Forest City, Iowa, submitted the plan which was used. A motion

was made that the cost of the church should not exceed \$7,000, the approximate amount on hand. William Horton offered to give a tract of land directly across the road from the church and the cemetery as a new building site. Therefore, the congregation voted a change in location for the new church.



William Horton

A farewell service on the closing of the fifty-year old church building took place April 30, 1933. The Rev. Christian Findahl officiated. He used as his texts: 1 Peter 5:4 and John 21:15-25. The week following was full of activity. Professor Cesander of Strandsburg, South Dakota packed up the pipe organ and it was taken to the Edward Larson farm where it was stored. Men began to tear down the old building, using care so that they might utilize as much of the old materials as possible for the new construction. This was during a period of depression. Such a building could not have been built had not the congregation and auxiliaries been saving towards such a time. Sam Klop-



Rev. W. I. Aamoth and Family

stad was hired as carpenter at 35c an hour. Members contributed 5 days of work without pay, and then worked ten-hour days at \$1 per day. Even non-members contributed labor and services.

Construction had progressed so that the cornerstone was laid on September 24, 1933. It contained documents both new and old. From the former corner stone: 1) a copy of the September 25, 1874 "Norsk Evangelist Lutherst Kirkentidende" which was then the official organ of the Norwegian Synod (This copy contained an article written by The Rev. O. A. Normann describing dedication of the cemetery and a mission festival of the Brule Creek Congregation on September 8, 1874; 2) A history of Brule Creek from 1867 to 1883 by Pastor E. O. Dale; 3) The original constitution; 4) Four coins: one 1874 quarter, one 1874 dime, one 1883 nickel, and 1883 penny. It also contained a message and a review by Rev. W. I. Aamoth for the years 1883-1934 and a report of the church secretary listing the 1933 congregational officers as well as those of the auxiliaries.

The building was far enough along so that by Thanksgiving, even though there was no heat, Thanksgiving Day services were held in the new structure. The heating plant, light fixtures, and the pipe organ were not installed until 1934. This was a very





Lloyd Strand

busy year, with the summer full of activities. The pulpit, baptismal font, altar, and the pipe organ were refinished. These articles had appeared shabby and alien to the general appearance of the new building. Work continued up to the very eve of the dedication. Carpeting for the chancel was furnished by the Ladies Aid and it was laid just in time for the dedication on August 31 - September 2, 1934. Rev. C. B. Runsvold came as the special speaker for this event. The fine musical ability of Pastor Aamoth was evidenced when the choir sang at various sessions and presented a cantata "The House of God". A large cake, shaped as a replica of the old church, was provided by Mrs. Arthur Lewison and was served to those who attended.

When Pastor Aamoth asked for additional help in his ministerial duties, Mr. Lloyd Strand was called. He accepted and was ordained at the St. Paul Church on November 26, 1933. Pastor Strand served one year in the parish. During 1933-34 Conrad Hoyer who was a young teacher in the community led an active junior choir at Brule Creek. On September 3, 1930, he mar-

ried Margaret Larson, a daughter of the congregation. Following his ordination, he served the Luthern Church of America as a parish pastor, and is presently the Associate Executive Secretary of the Commission for Cooperative Planning for the National Council of the Churches of Christ.

The winters of 1934 through 1936 were severe. Records show that services and meetings were cancelled repeatedly, especially in 1936. During one period there were no services for six weeks due to impassable, snow-clogged roads. The funeral of Thomas Anderson had to be scheduled twice. Then it was conducted with great difficulty with very few persons present. The summer of 1936 was as hot as the winter had been cold. On Memorial Day it was a withering 115 degrees. The annual church picnic was replaced in 1938 by an evening ice cream social. Reports include mention of the Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation in which Alvena Abrahamson, Alvira Larson, and Mildred Helseth are listed as presidents during this period.

In 1940 Pastor Aamoth and the congregations decided that it was better to own a parsonage than to rent. Since 1930 rent totaling \$3,000 had been paid. Then Immanuel Congregation built a fine home next to their church. It was understood that Brule Creek and St. Paul would assume a fair share of the housing expenses.

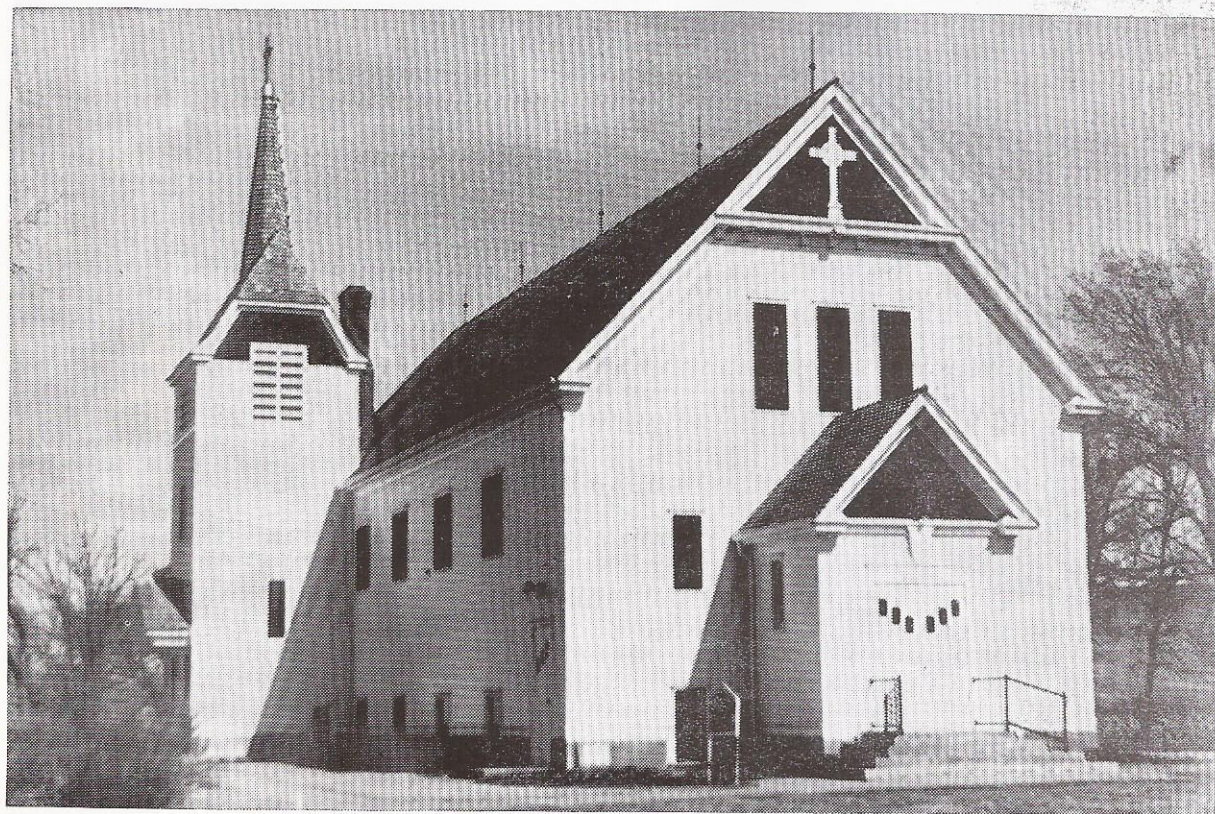
The W.M.F. was functioning actively. Mrs. Aamoth was an interested and helpful member. Up to 1940 some of the services had been conducted in Norwegian. Now all services were in the English language. To help the pastor and those who succeeded him, the congregation took over his portion of the Pension Plan obligations.

Rev. Aamoth accepted the call to a congregation in Iola, Wisconsin and the time came for parting. The Pastor's wonderful voice had enriched services and gatherings. His excellent leadership in choral music had constantly been used as a service to God's glory. As Rev. and Mrs. Aamoth departed in the fall of 1941 they left behind them many fond memories.





Brule Creek Church Final Service Picture



Present Brule Creek Church—1933



## Douglas Jacobson (1941-1946)



Rev. D. L. Jacobson Family

The Rev. Douglas Jacobson arrived on January 18, 1942 from Cutback, Montana. He was installed at the afternoon service following which the ladies served supper. Because the country was at war, many food and transportation items were being rationed. Activities at church, as elsewhere, were considerably hampered. At a W.M.F. meet-

ing the faithful service of Mrs. Elling Dale was commemorated by the purchase of an In Memoriam Certificate given to missions. Many more of these were given later.

On June 5, 1942 the first Life Membership Certificate was given by the W.M.F. to Mrs. Julia Abraham, the mother of sixteen children all of whom had been baptized and confirmed in this congregation. They included: Adolph, Ida (Solaas), Petra (Sommervold), Oliva (Sommervold), Roy, Ole, Hjalmer, Edward, Minnie (Halvorson), Alma (Claussen), John (deceased 1952), Leonard, Marie (Ronnei), Clarence, Violet (Sand), and Elvera (Rusten). In 1943 new curtains were bought for the basement by the L.D.R. The 50th anniversary of the W.M.F. was celebrated in 1944. A program was given by



**P. ABRAHAM FAMILY**—Left to right, front row: Leonard, Peter (father), Elvera (Rusten), Julia (mother), Violet (Sand), Marie (Ronnei); second row: Alma (Claussen), Ida (Solaas), Oleva (Sommervold), Minnie (Halvorson), Clarence; top row: Ole, John (deceased 1952), Adolph, Hjalmer, Roy Edward.



persons who were direct descendants of the charter members.

For a time during the war joint alternate services were held with St. Paul. Boys in the Armed Services were exempt from church dues for the duration of the war. Plaques were given in memory of Edward Offerdahl and Wayne Peterson who gave their lives for their country in World War II. A plaque was also given in memory of Bernard Nelson who died in World War I.

The Lord's Acre plan of giving to the church was proposed to the congregation in 1944. It was adopted by the congregation. The proceeds from one acre of each 160 operated was to be offered on the altar. This plan proved quite satisfactory for some time.

On January 13, 1944 a cemetery association constitution was submitted. It was adopted and the following officers were elected: Lars J. Larson, Chairman; Pete Quam, Vice Chairman; Ludvig Larson, Secretary-Treasurer. There were also to be three directors: Lewis Satter, Eric Offerdahl, and George Wilken.

The first minutes available from the Brotherhood organization date back to April 13, 1945, a meeting was held at the St. Paul Church with Rev. Jacobson serving as chairman. An election took place: Rev. Jacobson, Chairman; Jerome Johnson, Vice Chairman; Chris Larson, Secretary; and Lewis Helseth, Treasurer. The next meeting was to be at Brule Creek on May 18, 1945.

The St. Paul congregation voted to withdraw from the parish in 1945. From then to the present time the parish has consisted of Brule Creek and Immanuel congregations. Rev. Jacobson concluded his ministry to the parish on May 1, 1946.

A large farewell gathering was held for the Jacobson family on Easter Sunday afternoon.

On May 8, 1945 at the toll of the church bell, people of the surrounding area came to church "just as they were" in everyday farm clothes. The occasion was the long-awaited V Day. It was a time of joy and thankfulness that the war was finally over.

## I. G. Hastad (1946-1956)

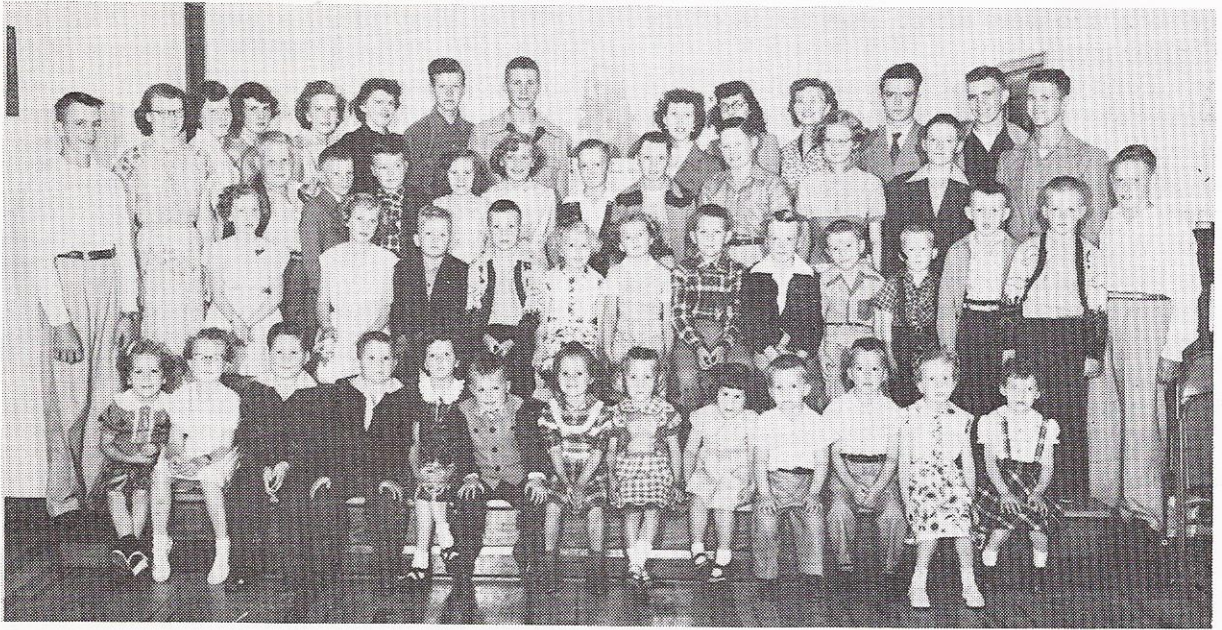


I. G. Hastad Family

A call was sent to The Rev. I. G. Hastad who had been serving as Field Director,

American Red Cross Division of the Armed Forces in the Pacific. He accepted the call





Sunday School, 1953

and came in the summer of 1946 to serve Brule Creek and Immanuel. He was installed on August 15 by Dr. L. A. Pierson, South Dakota District President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

In 1948 a file was purchased by the two congregations as a precautionary measure to protect the precious heritage we have in our church records. In the same year in March at a Brotherhood meeting this organization chose a new name for itself. Out of four names proposed, "United Brotherhood" was

chosen by an overwhelming vote. This organization included men from St. Paul, Immanuel, Ahlsborg, and Brule Creek.

In September of 1950 volunteer men of the congregation turned out in large numbers for the painting of the church. In a couple of days the outside of the church beamed with a fresh coat of paint. Gust Abraham appears to have been the "official" mixer.

At the close of 1952, J. M. Larson resigned having served as organist almost continuously since 1916. There were short intervals in which Amber Olson served as organist and Mrs. Letta Newgard and Mrs. Alfred Gunderson served as pianists.

The Sunday School was a thriving group of 100 at this time. This picture was taken the first Sunday in June, 1953. The occasion was a congregational picnic. But due to rain, the picnic had to be held at the church. Before the day was over, six inches of rain had fallen and many people crossed swollen streams to reach home. That night the Floyd and Sioux Rivers rampaged. Sioux City suffered a great deal of property damage and several lives were lost.

Another day of regret came in the bid-



Church Painting, Gust Mixing Paint





Martin Larson at Organ

ding of the Hastad's "Good-by". They left in January of 1956 to assume duties at their new parish in Jasper, Minnesota.

During the period of vacancy which lasted over a year, Dr. Selmer Berge, who was then serving St. Paul, instructed the confirmation class and performed other ministerial duties. The Rev. Harry R. Gregerson of Lutheran Vespers Radio Broadcasts and The Rev. O. A. Syverson, both of Sioux Falls, conducted services on Sundays.

## Selmer J. Hilmoie (1957-1962)

After the prolonged wait for a pastor, it was a joyful day in 1957 when Pastor Hilmoie was installed. New pastors bring new ideas. One program carried out for some time was the regular visitation of the shut-ins with a tape recording of the previous Sunday's sermon. Also, the women at this time assumed responsibility for providing fresh flowers on the altar. In 1958 "women's suffrage" was granted the women of Brule Creek. They were able for the first time to participate in business meetings, to vote, and to hold office.

Many years of prayer, study, and planning on the part of the Synod bore fruit in

1959 as a merger with two other synods became a reality. The Evangelical Lutheran Church (Norwegian) joined the American Lutheran Church (German) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish) to form the new American Lutheran Church. Also an important change for the women as the result of this merger was that the former W.M.F. became the American Lutheran Church Women. This made necessary a new constitution and by-laws. The congregation also found it necessary to revise its constitution. A committee consisting of J. M. Larson, Burnett Quam, and Olaf Abrahamson worked on this for almost two years. Then in 1961 it was adopted with a few minor changes.

In 1961 a telephone was installed in the church with its maintenance to be paid by the LCW. At the annual meeting in 1962 it was voted to use the new order of service as found in the new Service Book and Hymnals which had recently been given as memorials.



Selmer J. Hilmoie Family

In May of 1962 Brule Creek assumed part of the sponsorship for a new congregation at Hawarden, Iowa. The new Hawarden Lutheran Church was dedicated on April 12, 1964 and the parish is now a thriving congregation.

In the fall of 1962 the Luther League joined two other Leagues, those of St. Paul and Immanuel, to form a Tri-League that meets once a month. Each of the three leagues continues to have its own meetings as before and this Tri-League arrangement is in addition to their separate programs.



Again the time came to bid "Good-by" to a family that had endeared itself in a special way. Pastor Hilmo accepted the call to serve as Educational Director of First

Lutheran Church in Brookings, South Dakota. He and his family moved to their new field of work the latter part of December, 1962.

## Kermit J. Rye 1963 to the present

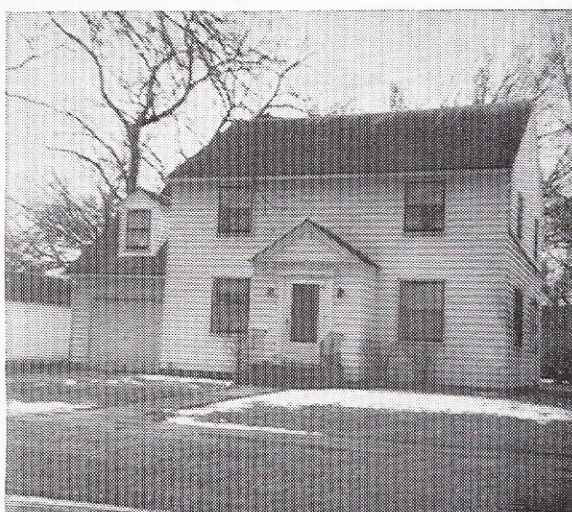


Rev. and Mrs. Kermit Rye

The Rev. Kermit Rye, our present pastor, came to us in January of 1963 following a three year pastorate in Wisconsin, a year of study abroad at the University of Edin-

burgh, Scotland, and a brief interim assignment as assistant pastor at First Lutheran Church in Brookings, South Dakota. He was installed on January 14, 1963 by Dr. E. O. Gilbertson, President of the South Dakota District of the American Lutheran Church. Pastor Rye was married to Doris Rollag of Beaver Creek, Minnesota on October 5, 1963.

On November 22, 1963, the world was shocked and saddened by the news that the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, had been assassinated. The following Sunday service became a memorial. His sudden and violent death had a profound and sobering effect upon our nation and upon this community.



Present Parsonage



# The Conclusion

There are many additional items that should be mentioned. There are two girls from this congregation who are married to pastors: Margaret Larson (Mrs. H. Conrad Hoyer) and Marilyn Twedt (Mrs. Sheridan Erickson). For the past 100 years the congregation has had only six secretaries, all of whom were Larsons: John, Albert, Adolph, Sr., Ludwig, J. Martin, and Adolph. It has had only five treasurers: Lars Larson, Edward Larson, William Horton, George Larson, and Leverne Klemme. Many memorials, as well as some sizable estates, have been given to the church down through the years. It is in sincere appreciation that we recognize these gifts. We pray that each donor may have experienced the joy of "laying up treasure for himself in Heaven".

In the pictures we have taken of the members of our congregation who are sixty years or older, we are sorry that it was not

possible for everyone to be present. To all the older members of our church we pay a special tribute. They are the connecting link that has transmitted the faith of their fathers to us, their children. We thank God for our heritage — for the spiritual concern each generation has had for their children. We thank them for their deep reverence for the Word of God, the Sacraments, and the Church. It is our prayer that our children, instilled with a strong faith, may "run the race that is set before them, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:1-2.

As we close the door on this century, let us be reminded that we must "Seek that which is above!" Colossians 3:1. With our hands in God's hand, may we walk by faith into the church of the future, the Church Triumphant. For under the leadership of Jesus Christ our final victory is assured.





# CONFIRMED

# MEMBERSHIP

Abraham, Adolph	Huff, Mrs. Russell	Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Everett
Abraham, Mr. and Mrs. Albert	Huff, Lawrence	Peterson, Charles
Abraham, Mr. and Mrs. Gust	Jervik, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford	Powell, Mrs. Archie
Abraham, Gerald	Jervik, Marlys	Powell, Sharon
Abraham, Mr. and Mrs. Hjalmer	Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell	Powell, Joe
Abraham, Mr. and Mrs. Roy	Johnson, Ida	Powell, Mr. and Mrs. Howard
Abraham, Donald	Kjose, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred	Quam, Mr. and Mrs. Burnette
Abraham, Mr. and Mrs. Delmer	Kjose, Mr. and Mrs. Arden	Quam, Gary
Abraham, Mr. and Mrs. Norman	Kjose, Ronald	Quam, Kay
Abraham, Kenneth	Kjose, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis	Quam, Mark
Abraham, Keith	Kjose, Mr. and Mrs. Eldean	Quam, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer
Abraham, Mr. and Mrs. Russell	Kjose, Martin	Quam, Gayle
Abraham, Alan	Kjose, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon	Quam, Mr. and Mrs. Paul
Abraham, Karen	Kjose, Karlene	Quam, Mr. and Mrs. Rocklin
Abraham, Clarence	Kjose, Maxine	Quam, Mr. and Mrs. Nels
Abrahamson, Mr. and Mrs. Olaf	Klemme, Mr. and Mrs. Emil	Quam, Mr. and Mrs. Norrell
Abrahamson, James	Klemme, Mr. and Mrs. Leverne	Quam, Barbara
Abrahamson, Larry	Klemme, Glen	Quam, Benny
Abrahamson, Curtis	Klopstad, Mrs. Anne	Rye, Rev. and Mrs. Kermit J.
Albin, Thomas	Klopstad, Mrs. Lena	Sand, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey
Albin, Susie	Larson, Adolph J.	Sand, Vernon
Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Albert	Larson, Edward	Satter, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis G.
Anderson, Arthur	Larson, Helmer	Satter, Mr. and Mrs. Luverne
Anderson, Mrs. Carrie	Larson, Mr. and Mrs. John W.	Satter, David
Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Ellerd	Larson, Mrs. Marie	Satter, John
Anderson, Leslie	Larson, Mr. and Mrs. J. Martin	Shedd, Mr. and Mrs. Elton
Anderson, Karen	Larson, Sophie	Shedd, Mr. and Mrs. Norman
Anderson, Cheryl	Law, Mr. and Mrs. Max	Solem, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley
Anderson, Mabel	Lewisson, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur	Sommervold, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald
Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Shernold	Lockey, Mrs. Willard	Swanson, Manning
Bird, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald	Lundgren, Mr. and Mrs. Chester	Swanson, Mr. and Mrs. Marlen
Crowther, Juanita	Lundgren, Robert	Swanson, Mr. and Mrs. Lester
Carlson, George	Lundgren Dianne	Sullivan, Nancy
Carlson, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard	Lundgren, Mr. and Mrs. Fred	Thormodsgaard, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin
Carlson, Linda	Marple, Mrs. J. R.	Thormodsgaard, Alice
Edwards, Mr. and Mrs. John	Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Carl	Thormodsgaard, Elvin
Fickbohm, Mr. and Mrs. Walter	Nielsen, Niels	Tiltrum, Mr. and Mrs. Robert
Fickbohm, Diane	Nielsen, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin	Tiltrum, Charles
Granstrom, Mrs. Hugo	Nielsen, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald	Tiltrum, Eileen
Huebner, Mr. and Mrs. August	Nielsen, Merlin	Twedt, Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln
Huebner, Melvin	Nielsen, Norman	Twedt, Carter
Huebner, Mr. and Mrs. Norman	Nielsen, Roger	Welch, Mr. and Mrs. Orville
Huebner, Richard	Nielson, Loren	Wilken, Mr. and Mrs. George
Huebner, Edwin	Nygard, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford	Welch, Clayton
Hanson, Albert	Nygard, Gorman	Welch, Orris
Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. Leo	Newgaard, Mrs. Letta	Wilken, Dallas
Hanson, James	Olson, Mr. Alf	Wilken, Ila Belle
Hansen, Nels	Offerdahl, Lloyd	Williams, Mrs. Bertina
Helseth, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold	Offerdahl, Donald	Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest
Helseth, Sandra	Offerdahl, Mrs. Rudolph	Williams, Linda
Helseth, Linette	Oferdahl, Rudolph, Jr.	
Helseth, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis		





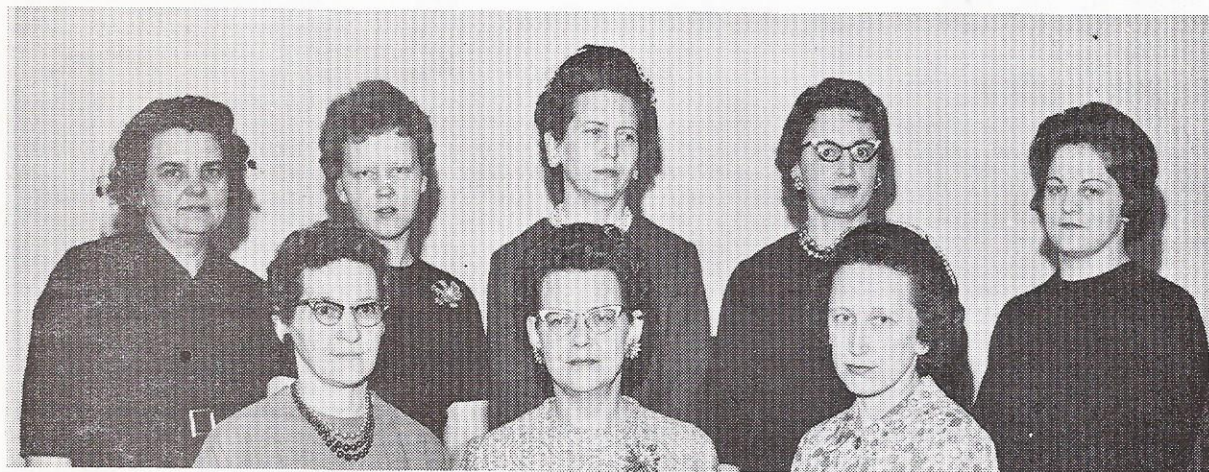
**TRUSTEES 1964** — Norrell Quam, Forrest Williams, Russell Abraham, Melvin Nielson, Cliff Jervik, Ellerd Anderson.



**Mrs. Forrest Williams, Organist 1964**

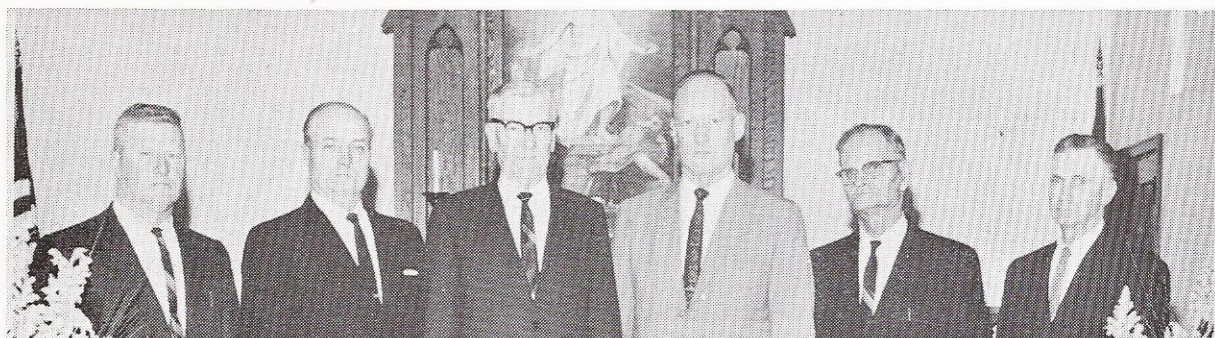


**BOARD OF EDUCATION 1964** — Mrs. Everett Peterson, Mrs. Norman Abraham, Mrs. Robert Tiltrum.

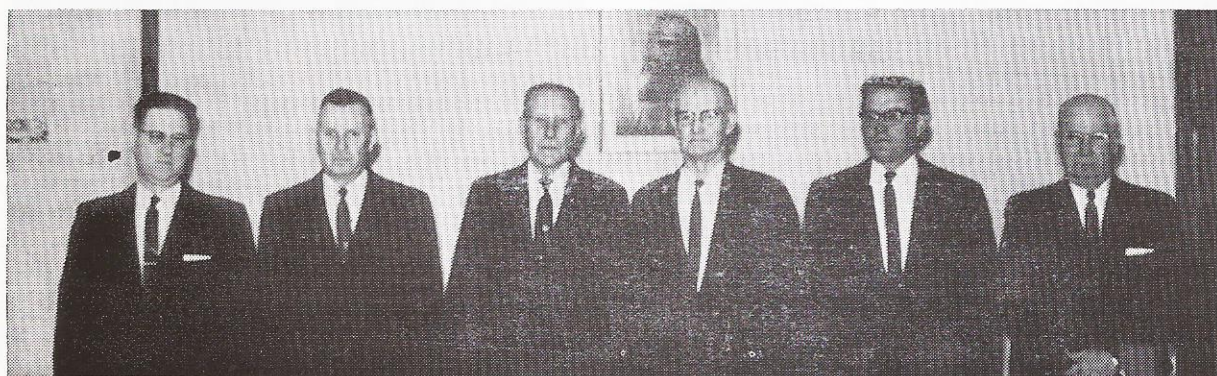


**SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF 1964** — Mrs. Melvin Neilson, Sec-Treas; Mrs. Shernold Anderson, Mrs. Arnold Helseth, Mrs. Leverne Klemme, Mrs. Norman Shedd. Front row Mrs. George Wilken, Mrs. Russell Abraham, Supt.; Mrs. Chester Lundgren.

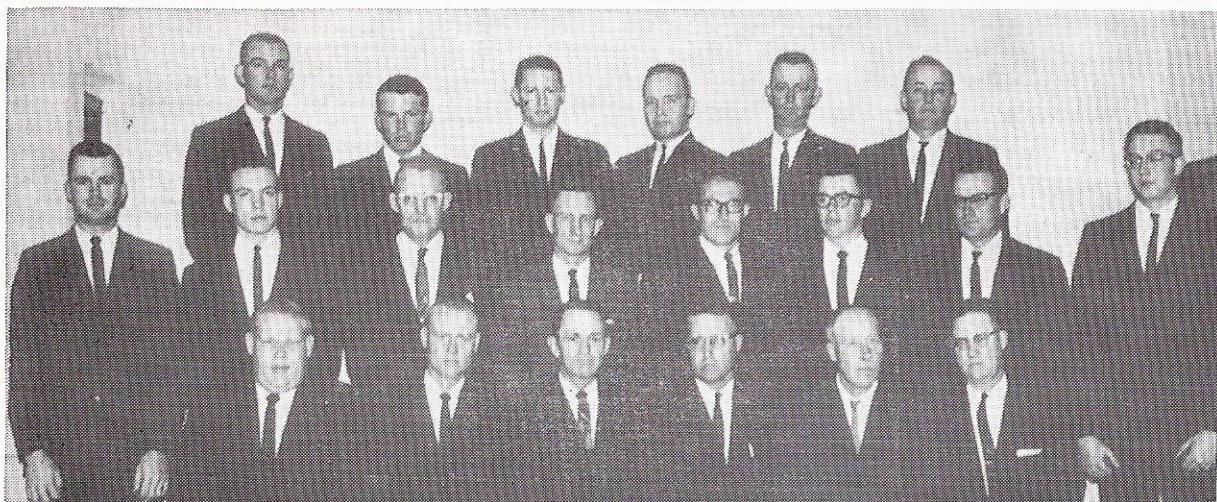




**CHURCH OFFICERS 1964** — Leverne Klemme, Treas.; Olaf Abrahamson, V. Chm.; Lincoln Twedt, Chm.; Adolph Larson, Sec.; Edward Larson, Custodian; George Wilken, Financial Sec.



**DEACONS 1964** — Arnold Helseth, Norman Abraham, Lewis Helseth, Emil Klemme, Darrel Johnson, Paul Quam.



**USHERS 1964** — Top row—Ronald Bird, Gorman Nygard, Norman Shedd, Shernold Anderson, Cliff Jervik, Arden KJose; second row—Rocklyn Quam, Larry Abrahamson, Robert Tiltrum, Vernon KJose, Charles Peterson, Dallas Wilken, Darrell Johnson, Lawrence Huff; front row — Clayton Welch, Dennis KJose, Everett Peterson, Forrest Williams, Chester Lundgren, Arnold Helseth.





**PARKING COMMITTEE 1964** — Chester Lundgren, Carl Nelson, Howard Powell; missing Leonard Carlson, Robert Tiltrum.



**UNITED BROTHERHOOD 1964**—Burnette Quam, Delmont Johnson, John Kalstad and John E. Larson.



**LUTHER LEAGUE** — Eilene Tiltrum, treas.; Gayle Quam, Sec.; Mr. and Mrs. Leverage Klemme, Mr. and Mrs. Archie Powell, Advisors; Curtis Abrahamson, V. Pres.; Sharon Powell, Pres.





**CEMETERY ASSOCIATION OF 1964**—Everett Peterson, director; Lewis Helseth, vice president; Elmer Quam, president; Emil Klemme, director; Ar-chie Powell, secretary-treasurer; missing, Roy Abraham, director.



**"American Lutheran Church Women"**, as they met March 4, 1964.



**A.L.C.W. OFFICERS 1964** — Mrs. Orville Welch, Sec.; Mrs. Cliff Jervik, Stewardship Sec.; Mrs. Roy Abraham, Chm.; Mrs. Arden Kjose, Education Sec.; Mrs. Melvin Neilson, V. Chm.; Mrs. Leonard Carlson, Treas.





**SIXTY YEARS AND OLDER** — Nels Quam, Albert Anderson, Roy Abraham; Lena Klopstad, Mable Anderson, Mamie Locky.

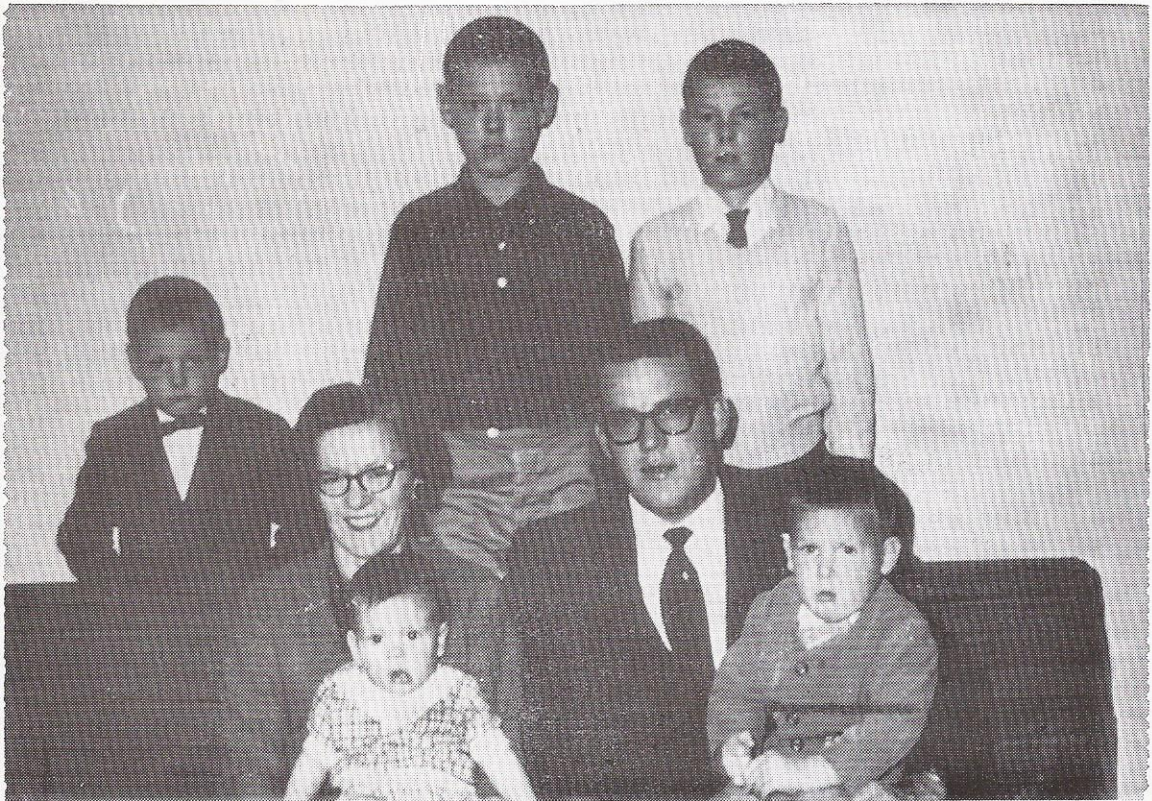


**Dr. Conrad Hoyer and Family**





**"SIXTY YEARS AND OLDER"**—Left to right, top row: L. S. Twedt, Eddie Larson, Emil Klemme, Adolph Abraham, N. P. Nielson, Everett Peterson, George Wilken, Lewis Helseth, Joe Powell; front row: Letta Newgard, Mrs. Roy Abraham, Mrs. J. M. Larson, Bertha Marple, Ida Johnson, Tina Williams, Mrs. Emil Klemme, Mrs. Lewis Helseth, Mrs. Albert Abraham, Albert Abraham.



**Pastor Sheridan Erickson and Family**





1964 Sunday School



*Plain Talk Publishers, Inc., Vermillion, S. D.*